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ABSTRACT

From ancient Greece to the rise of modern science in the 18th and 19th centuries, liberal adult education was a predominant philosophy. Progressivism, which developed in opposition, had the greatest impact on adult education. It viewed the teacher as a guide, consultant, and resource; the learner as responsible for learning in partnership with the teacher; and education as an instrument of social change. Behaviorists took their basic principles from progressives, but emphasized using the scientific method to arrive at knowledge. Many adult programs adopted behavioral objectives and accountability concepts from the behaviorism movement; the greatest impact was in curriculum design and program development. The humanist movement emphasized development of the whole person. Paulo Freire brought radical adult education on the scene; he spoke of using education to bring about social change. In the last 30 years, teachers experienced problems using the pedagogical model that ignored adults' needs and learning styles. Malcolm Knowles fostered the study of andragogy, the art and science of helping adults learn. Andragogical teaching incorporated the following research findings about adults: they desire to apply what they learn immediately and be independent and self-directing; and they need intrinsic motivation. Technological tools changed how to educate and deliver adult education. Distance delivery reached excluded populations. The teacher's new role was to link learners to resources and provide support for self-directed learning. (Contains 21 references.) (YLB)

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A History of the Adult Distance Education Movement

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From the time of Greek thought to the rise of modern science in the 18th and 19th centuries, liberal adult education was a predominant philosophy (Elias & Merriam, 1995, p.13). Liberalists at that time viewed education as a right or privilege for politicians, leaders, and the elite class. Emphasis was (and still is today) on developing the mind using the Great Books, a program based on the philosophy of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. The Great Books were used for an intellectual education for politicians to produce good and virtuous leaders. These books included well-known poets, philosophers, scientists, theologians, and novelists. Most of the learning was done through group discussion. In 1632 William and Mary, Harvard, and Yale colleges opened as the first formal liberal educational institutions (Widoff, Janet, 1999, Nova Southeastern EAD 8003 class slides).

The strongest push for liberal study in this country came from the Center for the Study of Liberal Education for Adults, established in 1951 in Chicago and funded by the Ford Foundation (Elias and Merriam, 1995 p.22). The center closed in 1961, although there was some renewed interest in the 1970's to meet the needs of the non-traditional college student.

Dewey, a progressive educator, criticized the fact that liberal education was only for the leadership class of society and pointed out that it was to society's benefit to have

educated citizens. Franklin, considered the founder of American adult education, pressed for a more democratic-vocational type program and in 1728 started conducting formal adult group discussions (Elias & Merriam, 1995, p.18). Jefferson also stressed the importance of an educated citizenry to prevent the abuses of government. Rush took it a step further to call for the education of women, a group previously left out.

Progressivism developed in opposition to liberal education (Elias & Merriam, 1995, p.205) and it was during this period that the modern adult education movement began. With the rise of modern science a new educational theory was created to explain the view of the world. James's and Dewey's writings emphasized the relationship between education and society. Dewey placed education at the heart of social reform. He believed "education would flourish if it took place in a democracy" (Elias & Merriam, p.49). This progressive stance was well accepted by adult educators in the United States. Herbert Spencer emphasized science as a way to improve the human condition. This was important at a time when mass immigration was filling urban areas because progressives believed in bringing about change to improve the status of all people.

The progressive movement has had the greatest impact on adult education compared to the other adult education movements. Knowles, Rogers, Freire, Lindeman and others' writings all

contain elements of progressive thought. The progressive movement supported a broadened view of education (as opposed to being confined to a study of certain disciplines) to include socialization or inculturation. During this period adult education content shifted from general knowledge to several other areas: Vocational education, citizenship, education of women, health, and public affairs. The first public schools to offer programs to adults opened in the 1920's. The American Association for Adult Education was formed in 1926.

Progressives have always viewed the teacher as a guide, consultant and resource, rather than as the sole provider of knowledge (Elias, 1995, p.64). They saw the learner as taking responsibility for learning in partnership with the teacher. Education was viewed as an instrument of social change. Lindeman wrote about his belief that in a democratic society, education and participation were necessary for bringing about change. Several features of progressive education were incorporated into adult education theory and practice: Learner-centeredness, the experimental method, reflective inquiry, and social activism. Science was emphasized at the expense of the humanities, history, literature and the arts.

Adult education had a vocationally oriented dimension, but Lindeman pointed out that adult programs should provide more than just vocational education. "Vocational education is

designed to equip students with the proper means for arriving at their selected goals. Adult education goes beyond the means and demands of new sanctions, new vindication of end" (Lindeman, 1961, p.33). "The more one specializes, the more diminished are one's functions and we should delimit the area of our functions as well as the size of our problems to educate ourselves" (Lindeman, 1961, p.80).

Behaviorists, the next group to emerge, were founded by John Watson in the 1920's. They focused on job skills and external observable behavior. The goal of behaviorists was to bring about behavior that would ensure survival of humans, societies and individuals. Both progressives and behaviorists desired to control human behavior and viewed education as a tool for bringing about societal change.

"Behaviorists from Watson through Skinner believe all human behavior is the result of a person's prior conditioning and is determined by external forces in the environment over which a person has little of no control" (Elias & Merriam, 1995, p.79).

The basic behaviorist principles were taken from progressives but emphasized using the scientific method to arrive at knowledge (Elisa & Merriam, 1995, p.204). This method is still used in research today.

According to behaviorists, the teachers' role was to design an environment that reinforced positive behavior and

extinguished undesirable behavior. Students had behavioral objectives that specified the behavior to be demonstrated by learners after completion of instruction. Many adult education programs use this element in their programs today, to ensure accountability. The focus of behaviorist educators is on the end result. Many systems such as planning, programming, budgeting systems (PPBS), systems approaches, and competency-based education were developed to concentrate on this.

Elias & Merriam point out that competency-based education is well suited for adult education, as it allows for individual differences in learning (students come to class at different starting points and accomplish objectives at different speeds). Many continuing education programs use competency-based education. Critics said (and still say) competency-based education lacks concern for the student, and inhibits creativity.

In 1945 adult education came of age, resulting from the need for vocational training to support the war effort. Junior colleges became community colleges.

Over time societal needs began changing at a faster pace than education could keep up with, which left untrained adult workers. When it became evident that the schools were not meeting their training needs, businesses began training their

own workers. Other companies formed school-business partnerships to ensure their training needs were met.

Keeping up with changing needs for training is still a problem today. This was brought to attention in January, 1999, when Vice-President Gore convened a summit. With education, business, labor and government leaders, he discussed how the groups could work together to provide continuous education for workers, to meet changing job-skill needs (Hebel, 1999, Chronicle).

Many adult programs (vocational education, adult basic education, continuing education programs) use behavioral objectives and accountability concepts today that came from the behaviorism movement.

The greatest impact on adult education from behaviorism has been in curriculum design and program development (Elias & Merriam, 1995, p.99). Tyler's (1949) model for designing an educational activity is still followed: stating objectives and then designing learning experiences to facilitate the learning, followed by evaluation. Even though Malcolm Knowles identifies with humanistic principles in his approach to adult education, his program reflects Tyler's influence: His model begins with a needs assessment and uses learning objectives (Elias & Merriam, 1995, p.102).

Individualized instruction and competency-based education are also based on behaviorist principles. In response to focusing only on the outward behavior of students, a new movement developed. Humanists are concerned with the development of the whole person, especially the emotional and affective dimensions of personality (Elias & Merriam, 1995, p.109). Humanists believe education should be student centered. The relationship between the teacher and student is important in developing the potential of students.

Humanists believe in recognizing and valuing individuality and the uniqueness of each person. Lindeman stated that youth are educated to think of learning as a process that ends when life begins, but "education **is** life, and therefore education can have no endings" (Lindeman, 1961, p.3-5).

Both progressives and behaviorists supported scientific observation, problem solving, hypothesis testing, and control. Behaviorists, however, departed from progressive thought in the idea of controlling human behavior (Elias & Merriam, 1995, p. 204). Progressives and radicals both viewed education as a means for bringing about societal change but didn't agree on the vision for society.

Another movement, radical adult education, was brought on the scene by a Latin American adult educator, Paulo Freire. He spoke about using education to bring about social, political and

economic changes to society. Radicalists didn't want to see education in the hands of the state, as this would serve the political interests of those in control. George Counts was the first American educator (1932) to advocate a radical approach to education based on Marxist principles. He felt education could cure the ills of society and lead the nation to socialism. In the late 1960's and early 1970's, numerous articles came out proposing the elimination of schools as the necessary condition to free people (Elias & Merriam, 1995, pgs.142, 166). Other than literacy programs which developed from this movement, radical education hasn't had any great impact on the practice of adult education in this country.

The basic assumptions and concepts about adult learners and learning from Eduard C. Lindeman have basically stayed the same for 73 years (since 1926) with some enrichment (Knowles, 1980, p.18). It is interesting that until recently, no one considered the needs of the learner in designing educational programs. Lindeman (1961) argued against a system based on subjects where students are seen as receptacles to be filled up with subject matter and where curriculum drives the program (p.112-3). He argued that where adults are concerned, we should focus on the method and not on the content. We should promote situational learning where problems are discussed and situations analyzed (p.114). He proposed that adults need a new kind of textbook

and teacher in order to use the practical experiences of life to enliven subjects (p.123). This experienced-based learning meets the needs of adults, who want to be able to share their lifetime experiences and learn skills they can immediately apply to their home or work situation.

In 1962 Malcolm Knowles proposed that education should meet the needs of students and be student-centered (Elias and Merriam, 1995, p.11). Knowles and other humanist educators said that in order to promote life-long learning skills, schools needed to change from being organized around courses to being organized around the learners' needs. The self-directed learning that humanists proposed is a part of most adult education programs today, especially distance learning programs.

The goal of humanistic education was and is the development of self-actualizing persons, rather than teaching a set curriculum. Emphasis in on learning rather than teaching and on the student rather than the instructor. Motivation is intrinsic rather than extrinsic. Groups are used to foster growth and cooperation.

Only in the last 30 years has attention really been paid to the adult learner (Lawler, 1991, p.12). Until the 1970's adult education was never considered as a separate entity, and the same practices used to teach children were used to teach adults. The general principles of adult education were never questioned

until Lawson attempted to define adult education and raised philosophical questions in 1975 (Elias & Merriam, 1995, p.6).

After awhile, teachers of adults began experiencing problems with using the pedagogical model, such as the learning of knowledge and skills that didn't meet adult needs in a period of rapid societal change. Adults have different needs and learn differently than children.

The study of Andragogy (the art and science of helping adults learn) is fairly new and is credited to Malcolm Knowles (Knowles, 1970, P.38). Andragogy identifies some characteristics of adult learners that are different from children and that need attention. In the 20th century as a result of John Dewey's writings criticizing traditional education, it became apparent from writings of adult educators that adults had different needs than children and require different techniques than those used with children.

The difference between the adult student and a younger learner "…goes way beyond age and years" (Lawler, 1991, p. 11). Adults have diverse experience, and are self-directed. Adults are also capable of more complex processes. Research is now showing that traditional educational methods of memorization, lecture, minimal involvement and large classes are inappropriate for adults, and perhaps younger students as well (Lawler, 1991,

p.11). Adults want to immediately apply what they learn to their jobs or homes.

Research shows that adults' reaction time is slower. Adults need more time to think and react, especially to receive the stimulus. Vision decreases sharply between ages 30-55 and so there is a need for more light. There is also a slight loss of hearing, so the instructor's speech should be slower. Intellectual functioning slows down, and there is minor memory loss. Unless material is meaningful for the adult, it will be poorly retained (Cross, 1981, p.155). Most adults work full time days and have a need for evening schedules.

Adults' personalities remain remarkably consistent (Cross, 1981, p.166) and they have more self-confidence and autonomy than children. Adults want to be independent and self-directing as they are more mature. They have a vast amount of life experience they can relate to and can attach more meaning to learning they gain from experience (Knowles, 1980, p.44).

Research on adult learning supports humanistic notions that adults are self-directed and intrinsically motivated (Elias & Merriam, 1995, p.134). Rogers, Knowles, and McKenzie are three educators who support humanistic practice in adult education, such as the viewing student as the center of the model, the teacher as a facilitator, and learning as a personal, internal process leading to a fully developed person.

The principles of andragogy call for: Establishing a climate of trust, assessing needs and interests, defining objectives, constructing a framework, operating the program, and evaluating the results (Knowles, 1980, p.14). Elias, (1979) however, takes the position that andragogy needs to be validated with empirical evidence, and says assumptions of andragogy have little or no support from research.

The author found much research pointing out the differing needs of adults in learning. Kidd (1973, p.23 as described in Cross) says the contrast in adult education is not between teacher and student but between teaching and learning (Cross, 1981 p.226) even if it doesn't serve as a theory of education.

The most serious work in the conceptual analysis of adult education has been done by Lawson (1975) and Paterson (1979). They have looked at the needs in adult education based on a philosophical approach and propose value free adult education. They say that it is clear from work analyzing education that lifelong education is a necessity for full human development. With traditional education the learner is dependent on the teacher for what is to be learned and how. As the Internet provides the latest information, replacing much of the need for textbooks, the learner can find his/her own information independently.

Knowles made a good point when he described "modern" as being a very temporary state. The half-life of current educational practices is about ten years- after that half of the practices become outdated (Knowles, 1980, p.18). Four information technology fields - computer hardware, computer software, communications, and information services are driving a technological revolution (Kull, M. and Halal, 1998, p.2).

The new tools of the computer and telecommunications industry are eliminating the barriers of time and distance, changing the source of information, and the mode of delivery. Everything is connected everywhere (Knoke, 1996, p.6). Telecommunications are modifying the way we communicate, teach, and learn.

Technological tools such as E-mail, real time Internet chat, videoconferencing, and teleconferencing are all making it possible to communicate from our homes. Today, adult students are abandoning the traditional on campus education and are going to school from their homes via surface mail, videotape, fax and modem.

Technological tools are changing the way we educate and deliver adult education (Cahoon, 1998). Distance delivery is allowing higher education to reach populations of learners and workers once excluded. "Technology based distance education is emerging as an increasingly important component of higher

education." (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1997). Information technology and distance education have been key factors changing education (Green, 1997, p. 4). It is rare today if an institution of higher education does not use some technology (E-mail, Web sites, chat rooms) in at least some of its programs (Green, K.,1997, p.4). Most higher education institutions have gone beyond these techniques to reach new audiences through distance learning programs delivered by a variety of new communications and information technologies (Comegno, 1999).

"Decades of research on distance delivery methods show that well-designed distance education is as good or better than classroom delivery of comparable content in terms of student learning" (Kovel-Jarboe 1994, p.5). Distance education is becoming widely accepted as a means for higher education to provide broader access and achieve cost efficiencies while maintaining quality programs (Cahoon, 1998, p.33).

Learners need to know how to teach themselves new skills. The new teacher's role needs to be one of helping to link learners to resources and providing support for self-directed leaning (Knowles, 1980, p.19). Students and workers want on-demand learning, and many institutions are beginning to offer modules they can access on the Web to meet their needs.

In order to meet the needs of working adults, universities must offer courses and training at a time and place convenient to them (Wallhaus, R., 1996, p.11). Adult students need flexible admissions policies and curriculum based on their needs. There is an opportunity for universities to provide learning to older adults who choose to remain working and for retired who choose to begin new career teaching.

The teachers' role is changing from being the one having access to information and controlling its flow to students, to the student being responsible for his/her own learning and obtaining his/her own information. Teachers need to teach students to recognize when information is needed, and how to locate it, evaluate it, and use it effectively (Green, K, 1995). We need to teach students to identify quality information from the web and to authenticate sources (Tripathi, 1999).

Faculty need to provide the conceptual framework and motivation to students to seek and integrate new information. Students need to be introduced to the Internet and shown how to acquire information and how to critique it. Given the certainty of technological change, we face the need for continuous learning (Cahoon, 1998, p.12). Teachers need to focus on individual learning, instead of group teaching (Daniel, J., 1998, p.16). It is now important to teach critical thinking skills, information literacy and understanding of collaboration,

but may no longer be necessary to teach content (Tripathi, A. K. 1999, May). The Internet and the World Wide Web are replacing content teaching and will soon become most of the infrastructure a college or school needs (Tripathi, 1999).

As the teacher's role in the classroom changes from dispenser of knowledge to facilitator of student learning, the curriculum planned by the teacher and guided by textbooks needs to change (Serim and Koch, 1996, p. 150). Current curriculum is designed around the teacher controlling information and needs to be updated to where it isn't confined to the classroom and meets the needs and interests of individuals.

Information Technology is providing access to better learning options such as the change from the university library as students' primary information source. Technology has provided students with access to networks where students can pick from an array of documents, literature, and research on the Internet, which is easier to search and faster than walking to the campus library. Technology is reducing the costs and enhancing the quality of the library. "With good learning materials, effective networks and proper support, students can learn better at home than in class" (Daniel, 1998, p.16).

We can see that as society changed, different movements arose to meet new needs of society. Only in recent years were the needs of the adult learner studied. Andragogical teaching

meets the identified needs of adults. Technology is changing the way knowledge is shared and delivered, causing changes in the teachers' role and in the way institutions need to educate professionals (Kull and Halal, 1998, p.4). In our technological society, one-time learning has become outdated and individuals need to continually update skills. Learning on demand and continuous learning are taking the place of the one-time education (Kull and Halal p.4.). Distance learning is allowing people to study through universities without ever leaving home (Daniel, 1997 p.138).

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